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P R O C E E D I N G S
of the
LOUISIANA WILD LIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION

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SPECIAL MEETING
Thursday, July 8, 1971
1:00 o'clock p.m.

Louisiana Wild Life and
Fisheries Commission,
District VII, Conference
Room,
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

J. G. Jones, Chairman.



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P R O C E E D I N G S

A special meeting of the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission was held on Thursday, July 8, 1971, at 1:00 o'clock p.m. in the Conference Room of the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission District VII Office, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, for the purpose of setting the hunting season dates on migratory birds other than waterfowl for the 1971-72 season, J. G. Jones, Chairman, presiding.

Present were:

J. G. Jones, Chairman

H. C. Wright, Vice-Chairman

C. M. Hoffpauer, Director

J. E. Kyle, Jr.

Hobson Norris

J. L. Winfree

THE CHAIRMAN: The meeting will come to order.

MR. JOE HERRING: We have received a letter from the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wild Life announcing that we will be offered a



September teal hunting season and we would like to recommend that the nine-day hunt be started on September 18 and extend through September 26, 1971. This would embrace the last two weekends in September, starting September 18 and running until September 26. Now the limit that we have states that the shooting hours would be sunrise until one hour before sunset. In the past seasons that we have had, the shooting hours have been from sunrise until sunset.

Under this new shooting hour proposal we think this is going to eliminate afternoon hunting of teal. We called Washington yesterday and talked to Charles Carruthers and Allan Studholm in the Interior Department and requested that they change this and extend the shooting hours until sunset. There are a lot of people in the state who can't hunt until the afternoon and we get some pretty heavy participation in this season in the afternoon. If they go ahead and shut off shooting one hour before sunset, this is going to just about eliminate afternoon hunting.



We reminded them that they had told us on about June 23 that the season would be held and it would be on the same basis as last year. Then when we received this letter, this does represent a major change which is going to probably cut back on the number of hunts that will be made in the state by as much as 25 percent.

MR. NORRIS: Do you have any idea as to who made that change?

MR. HERRING: Well, I asked them why they made the change and, first of all, they stated that some of the other states wanted to shut it off at this time. I pointed out the fact that if they allowed until sunset, then the other states would further restrict the federal regulations if they so desired.

They also then said that it was designed to protect the wood duck and I reminded them that in the September roost counts that we had made now for the past 15 years, that those birds move almost exclusively after sunset and go into roost and that the teal surveys that we have made during these past



teal seasons that have run until sunset have shown that very, very few wood ducks are taken, and those that are fired upon are fired upon during the morning hours, not in the afternoon hours.

They were not able to come up with any valid reason. It is just another one of these harassment type moves, in our opinion, and it is just not justified at all.

MR. WINFREE: Let me ask you this. These men that you spoke to on the phone, what was their reaction to your request?

MR. HERRING: Well, they stated that we should get this in writing to them so we sent out a letter yesterday over Clark's signature, outlining our reasons for having this shooting run on until sunset. Of course, Studholm was the man who was chairing the dove meeting and I believe Larry Soileau asked him about the teal season, if we were going to have it and so forth, and Studholm told him point-blank that the season would be allowed and it would be on the same basis as last year.



When I reminded him of this statement over the telephone yesterday, he said, "Well, what I really meant was that it would generally be the same as last year."

My response was that this is not then going to be generally the same as last year, that this was a major change from last year and was going to cut out about 30 or 40 percent of the hunting opportunity that we are going to be afforded, and that is not generally the same as last year.

MR. WINFREE: Was that done just arbitrarily or capriciously or something?

MR. HERRING: I would think so.

MR. KYLE: What about the other states?

MR. HERRING: Well, some of the other states can, on account of the wood duck problem, but 90 percent of our kill occurs in areas that you don't have wood ducks in, in the marsh area.

MR. WINFREE: Was the letter yesterday strong enough to give valid reasons?

MR. HERRING: We don't think they have



any valid reasons for cutting it off an hour before sunset. The other duck seasons run until sunset and the teal seasons we have had in the past years have run until sunset with no problems. Here all of a sudden, after leading us to believe that the regulations are going to be the same as last year, point-blank, and then they suddenly sent out this letter that shooting hours would be one hour before sunset.

MR. NORRIS: Well, why don't you all see what you can do? The Commission is making plans to get to Washington the last of July on our duck season.

MR. HERRING: I did not get any commitment from them over the telephone that they would change this, just that they would take it under advisement and for us to send a letter in.

MR. WINFREE: Did you send a copy of the letter to our Congressional delegation?

MR. HERRING: No, we didn't.

MR. WINFREE: I think it would be wise.

MR. HERRING: Yes, we can do that. I



started to call Jim DeRoy (phonetic) in Ellender's office this morning but he wasn't there.

MR. WINFREE: Why don't you send a copy of that letter to all the Congressional delegation and allow them to receive it and then the latter part of next week you might call one of them and tell them to follow the thing up.

MR. HERRING: Well, they are going to finalize these regulations after Monday. They are going to finalize these regulations probably Monday or Tuesday, so whatever we are going to do, we've got to do tomorrow. It will too late, I would say, after Monday to make a change.

MR. WINFREE: Well, maybe you ought to call them this afternoon, somebody in the Congressional delegation, and tell them the letter has gone out and what we are faced with and let them at least call over there or send a message or something to let them know how we feel about it.

MR. HERRING: Well, they told us one thing and they have done another.

MR. WINFREE: Well, I think that should



be pointed out to our Congressional delegation.

MR. HERRING: I'll bet you this is the fact that the Indians lost faith in the white man.

(Laughter)

The Great White Fathers told them one thing and did another.

MR. WINFREE: Well, I think you should call this afternoon. How many birds are they going to give us?

MR. HERRING: Same as last year. We have been taking about 200,000 teal during those seasons that we have had. Just straight bag limit, four blue or green-winged teal; no other species will be allowed.

THE CHAIRMAN: What is your pleasure?

MR. HERRING: We recommend now that we go ahead and set these dates.

THE CHAIRMAN: The closing hour being whatever the maximum that the Department of the Interior allows.

MR. HERRING: On this sheet that we have to return to them also we strongly urge that these



hours be extended to sunset, as a follow-up to our letter.

MR. WRIGHT: I so move.

MR. WINFREE: Second.

THE CHAIRMAN: Moved by Mr. Wright, seconded by Mr. Winfree. Is there any further discussion? Any objection?

(No response)

THE CHAIRMAN: There being none, so ordered.

MR. WINFREE: You are going to call up there this afternoon.

MR. HERRING: Yes.

MR. WRIGHT: You're not going to find many people up there today, I'm afraid.

THE CHAIRMAN: Joe.

MR. HERRING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have recommendations for the other migratory species other than waterfowl. I would just like to comment that last year was the last year of the 18 bird experiment that we had on doves. We will work with the Bureau now with a bag limit of 12 for a period of two years till we can make some



kind of adjustment or some type of tally on the kill that we have had and what it has done to the population on the 18 bird. The framework that they have given us this year on doves is September 1 through January 15, 70 one-half days, so we are recommending to the Commission a season of September 4, that will be on Labor Day weekend, through the 19th, which will give 16 days in the first segment.

This count is up here, if you would just like to look at it while we read out the dates. Next would be October 16 to November 14, a period of 30 days.

MR. WINFREE: When does that end?

MR. HERRING: November 14.

MR. WINFREE: How many days is that?

MR. HERRING: Thirty days.

MR. NORRIS: Joe, did you say September 4?

MR. HERRING: Yes, sir. Saturday.

The third period then, December 18 to January 10, a period of 24 days, making a total of 70 one-half days.

MR. KYLE: When did the third period open?



MR. HERRING: December 18 to January 10.

MR. KYLE: How many days?

MR. HERRING: 24 days. As you can see up here, the period totals 70 days, half-days.

MR. KYLE: Does that run until five o'clock?

MR. HERRING: Yes, sir. Sunset.

THE CHAIRMAN: What dates did we have last year?

MR. HERRING: Basically the same, the same time period. I would like to just make one comment. We did take a week off that middle segment because it would run into the opening of the deer season and put it onto the end, which would balance them up more or less there. We did have a lot of requests from central and south Louisiana to extend into January.

MR. WINFREE: This would be for 12 birds?

MR. HERRING: 12 birds, with a possession limit of 24.

MR. KYLE: Did they give a reason why they cut down on the birds?



MR. HERRING: That was an experiment for two years. It was to be tried to see what effect an increase in kill would have on the dove population in this case. Now, through the 14 southeastern states, in setting up this experiment with the Bureau, it was agreed that this would last for two years and then we would come back to the 12 bird limit after that for a period of two years, to give us sufficient time to see what effect the 18 bird kill had on the overall dove population. It left us no choice.

In fact, I was on the committee, the dove committee, that recommended it, so we recommended back to 12, which is no more than right, since we agreed to go into 18 first. Now, after this data is collected and we find out we have not hurt the dove population, then that's a new ball game and we can recommend 12, 15, 18, whatever we feel like after that, but it was an experiment and we felt like that we had to stand with our side of the bargain on it since we did get the 18. It was quite a, you might say, hassle in getting an increase of



six birds to start with.

THE CHAIRMAN: All right, next, Mr. Herring.

MR. HERRING: The next season we have then is for rails.

MR. WINFREE: Is there a motion on that?

MR. HERRING: Do you want to take each one separately?

THE CHAIRMAN: What is your pleasure on that?

MR. WRIGHT: I so move.

MR. WINFREE: Second.

THE CHAIRMAN: Moved by Mr. Wright, seconded by Mr. Winfree. Is there any further discussion? Any objection?

(No response)

THE CHAIRMAN: Hearing none, so ordered.

MR. HERRING: Now on rails, the framework is September 1 to January 15, daily bag limit of 15, possession limit of 30. Seventy days, a framework of seventy days, and we recommend October 30 to January 7 for one for rails.



MR. NORRIS: What was the framework on that?

MR. HERRING: The framework was September 1 to January 15. We select any 70 days within that period, so we are recommending then that the season be October 30 to January 7.

MR. KYLE: Wouldn't it be a good thing not to have it during the deer season? People out in the marsh. That's where most of the rails are.

MR. HERRING: Last year it worked out pretty good with our regular opening in October.

MR. KYLE: October 30?

MR. HERRING: Yes, sir. I think we had people going down just for rails.

MR. WINFREE: Let me ask you this, Joe. Who goes hunting on October 30th?

MR. HERRING: We have a few people that hunt around the Grand Isle area, along the marsh area, who do some rail hunting. They want to hunt during that period. We've got some real rail hunters.

MR. KYLE: How long a rail season are we talking about?



MR. HERRING: Seventy days.

MR. NORRIS: Why not start on the teal season?

THE CHAIRMAN: Is there any reason why we couldn't, Joe?

MR. HERRING: Well, we just had good use out of this last year. As far as changing it, they just run it from last year where we had about two months, compared to what we had last year. Any place during this framework would be suitable, as far as that goes. We had good utilization last year.

THE CHAIRMAN: Figure it out on the calendar when it would close, 70 days, if we started with the teal season.

MR. HERRING: It would be suitable, as far as that goes.

MR. WRIGHT: September 1 to what?

MR. NORRIS: Mr. Chairman, don't you think it is advisable to have this 70 days available during a 50 or 55-day duck season?

MR. WINFREE: If you would give us an opportunity to discuss this, I think maybe we would



work around to that very thing.

THE CHAIRMAN: Let's see when it would end if we did start it in September.

MR. HERRING: That would end November 12.

MR. NORRIS: Can we split it?

THE CHAIRMAN: That's closing too early.

MR. WINFREE: We don't even know when our duck season is going to be.

MR. WRIGHT: That could be the end of the duck season.

MR. WINFREE: It would appear that September 4, where hunters would be in the marsh shooting teal who have never shot rail before, it would afford them something else to shoot at, and we don't know when the duck season is going to be, so it would appear to me that if you ran from the fourth of September, 70 days, wherever that would be, then that would be bound to trail over into part of the duck season, whatever it may be.

MR. NORRIS: Well, on the other hand we are just getting nine days concurrent in the teal season, and we lose all that period after the teal season that you run up against.



MR. WINFREE: I thought, though, that we had to decide on these rails. We don't know when the duck season is going to be.

THE CHAIRMAN: We have to decide today.

MR. HOFFPAUER: Why don't we ask the federal people next year to allow us to split the season on the rails, then we can take care of that next year, where we can have a season concurrent with the teal season. If we set it that early this year, we are going to miss all of that, half of November and all of December.

MR. KYLE: It's too damned hot to go rail hunting, for a long time. We could take nine days off of 70 days and that's still 61 days.

MR. HERRING: The season last year was October 31 to January 8.

MR. WRIGHT: What would you suggest?

MR. HERRING: We recommend October 30 to January 7.

MR. WRIGHT: I'll make that motion for this year.

THE CHAIRMAN: It has been moved by Mr.



Wright. Is there a second, that we take Mr. Herring's recommendation? Is there a second to that?

MR. KYLE: Second.

THE CHAIRMAN: Seconded by Mr. Kyle. Is there any further discussion? All those in favor, say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

THE CHAIRMAN: Opposed, no.

(No response)

THE CHAIRMAN: So ordered.

MR. HERRING: The next season will be woodcock, daily bag limit of five, possession limit of ten. The framework will be September 1 to February 28. We can select 65 days within this period.

MR. WRIGHT: Can we split it?

MR. HERRING: We'll split it, but what we are recommending this year -- we did try a split last year, following the opening of the quail season, and then we waited a while and opened it again. However, this year we are recommending a straight season, starting with opening day of



quail season and going to January 28. Whichever day is immaterial, but we had more requests from people who quail hunt that this is when they would rather have it. There are more people woodcock hunting while they are quail hunting and this just carries it straight on through the 65 days rather than the short split we had last year.

THE CHAIRMAN: What do you recommend?

MR. HERRING: The recommended dates are November 25 to January 28.

THE CHAIRMAN: What is your pleasure?

MR. WINFREE: So move.

THE CHAIRMAN: Moved by Mr. Winfree.

MR. KYLE: Second.

THE CHAIRMAN: Seconded by Mr. Kyle. Is there any discussion? Any objection?

(No response)

THE CHAIRMAN: Hearing none, so ordered.

MR. HERRING: Mr. Chairman, the next season then is snipe season, with a daily bag limit of eight, possession limit of 16, and the framework the Bureau has given us in September 1



to February 28. They have given us 65 days within this period. We recommend the season be December 11 through February 13.

MR. KYLE: December 11?

MR. HERRING: Yes, sir. Last year the framework, and previous years, has been February 5 and this year is a little longer. I think they must have done this because of leap year because you have another day.

MR. NORRIS: You want to go to the 13th?

MR. HERRING: We are recommending the same season on it as we had last year, December 11 to February 13, yes, sir.

MR. WRIGHT: Joe, isn't there more snipe here a little bit later on here, in January and February, than in the latter part of December?

MR. HERRING: They are all basically down in February, latter part of January, and February. Last year we had a fairly mild winter and really the woodcock season was not good. It's something like woodcock. They did start moving back out. About the middle of winter you have a better chance.



MR. HOFFPAUER: Why couldn't you open it the same day you open that last dove season on the 18th and then push it another week back? If we got more birds here than you would have during that December?

MR. HERRING: Basically, biologically, any date within this period.

MR. WRIGHT: When are the most birds here? Is it February or is it December?

MR. HERRING: January and February.

MR. WRIGHT: If there are more birds here in February than there are in December, let's put --

MR. HERRING: If we have a mild winter, possibly by February they are going to be moving out. January is as good as February.

MR. WRIGHT: February 21?

THE CHAIRMAN: To the 20th?

MR. HOFFPAUER: I think that's too late.

THE CHAIRMAN: Too late?

MR. HERRING: This is basically the center of your population, during these periods



here. Well, it's not really when they are here; it's when they are available. When they are available, that's when they are out in the rice fields, and one advantage of trying this little later season this year would be to take advantage of this extension of the framework. Otherwise next year they will cut it back down. I would say if you have a chance to try it, I'd say try the later season and see how it works out. If it doesn't work out --

MR. WINFREE: Well, also, like the Chairman said, if you open it on December 18, you have doves opening the same day and the people in the coastal country, if they run across a snipe, they get a crack at that, too.

MR. HERRING: The first big snipe is around the first of November. They are available then because you've got a lot of winter rainfall then.

MR. WRIGHT: Plus the fact that there is very little open at that time, too. I mean your dove season is closed, your duck season is



closed, and everything else. That would be something else for them to shoot on up into the --

THE CHAIRMAN: Is there any other discussion? What do you want to do?

MR. WRIGHT: I move that we open it on the 18th and run it through the 20th, I believe it is the 20th.

MR. HERRING: February 20th.

THE CHAIRMAN: Open on the 18th of December.

MR. WINFREE: Second.

THE CHAIRMAN: It has been moved and seconded that we set the season beginning December 18 and run 65 days to February 20. Is there any objection?

(No response)

THE CHAIRMAN: Hearing none, so ordered. Go ahead, Joe.

MR. HERRING: O.K., Mr. Chairman. The next season is the gallinule. Daily bag limit of 15, possession limit of 30. Framework the Bureau has given us is September 1 to January 15



and we can select 60 days within this period. We recommend September 4 through November 12.

THE CHAIRMAN: What is your pleasure?

MR. WRIGHT: I so move.

MR. KYLE: Second.

THE CHAIRMAN: Moved by Mr. Wright, seconded by Mr. Kyle. Is there any further discussion? Any objection?

(No response)

Hearing none, so ordered.

MR. HERRING: That's all, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is there any other business? Do I hear a motion to adjourn?

MR. WINFREE: Hold it a minute. What has been done on this ibis situation?

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Director.

MR. HOFFPAUER: First of all, we've got lawyers looking at the law. Then we made a survey of the area, and as far as we can see now, it is impossible to have any kind of June, July, even August season, because here you have a lot of birds nesting and they want to protect the crawfish.



Seems like there ought to be other ways. Then after June and July the birds move out of his area, early fall, move to the marsh country.

(Inaudible discussion)

80 to 90 percent of their diet during the summer is crawfish in the basin area.

MR. KYLE: Mr. Director, I have talked to the biologists and everybody I have talked to is going to study the bird. Well, in addition to studying the bird, we've got some questions to answer, and I think what ought to be done and done immediately is to put somebody on it to discover exactly how destructive they are on the crawfish.

MR. HOFFPAUER: We've got somebody working on that. Actually, to come up with a figure of depredation is pretty hard. You've got to collect the birds on the site and all this other stuff and figure how much they eat a day, which I don't think anybody knows. That's the end of the ibis discussion.

MR. WINFREE: It appears to be that people don't want to talk about it.



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MR. HOFFPAUER: We're kind of hoping it will go away. Technically you could set the season, you could set it tomorrow from one o'clock in the morning until four in the morning.

MR. WRIGHT: That might be a good deal. ~~Set it at sunrise till breakfast time.~~

MR. NORRIS: Well, you say you hope it will go away and we can stick our head in the sand, but those crawfishermen are dead serious about it, and if we don't do something, they are going to. Now it is either for us to take a stand and try to do something -- one of our agents caught a bunch of them, spotted a bunch of them shooting them about three weeks ago and they had a 130 horsepower engine on the boat and they got away.

MR. HOFFPAUER: Actually there really isn't a season for controlling ibis. It's having some kind of scaring devices in the crawfish pond. We're not sticking our head in the sand. We can't take any steps until we know what we are doing. When they come back and give us some information, we can do something.



MR. WINFREE: Well, I think since we have members of the press here, Mr. Chairman, I think they should be apprised of what is being done and I wish the Director would tell the whole Commission what is being done relative to research and the field biologists checking the rookeries and hatcheries and so forth and so on. Tell us what is going on. We're not sticking our heads in the sand.

MR. HOFFPAUER: No. Next week we will start working on some of these exploders, flashers and everything else. I think if the birds would keep out of the crawfish ponds we wouldn't have a problem, wouldn't have the law passed.

MR. WINFREE: What are we doing now?

MR. HOFFPAUER: We are working on nest counts, egg counts, actual estimation of the population. Manasato (phonetic) is working on it.

THE CHAIRMAN: What is he doing?

MR. HOFFPAUER: All the same type of thing. This is a coordinated study. Larry Soileau, Joe Herring. Trying to get exactly what the picture is. We found out that the birds are at the peak of the



nesting season now. I may stand corrected, but I think in this one spot, you were looking at about 80, 90,000 birds in there. Then next week we will try these exploders and so forth and see if you can move them out of the crawfish ponds with the carbide guns and flashers. As far as the season, by law, I don't know. That's up to the Commission.

MR. KYLE: Didn't you ask for a ruling?

MR. HOFFPAUER: We haven't got it as yet. You haven't heard anything, have you? Oh, from Gremillion, yes. But I mean, Duffy was going to research the thing on actual legality, the law.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think Duffy did that.

MR. HERRING: The last word I got from Duffy was that the law would more or less require the Commission to set a season but it doesn't really say when. He said that you wouldn't have to set a season until such time as you have full information on which to base it, regulations, that this is set forth in the constitution, that you would manage your resource based on good sound information, and we do not have this at this time.



MR. HOFFPAUER: We intend to meet with the crawfish people next week.

MR. NORRIS: Well, there is no season set on anything else during the nesting season.

MR. HERRING: This would be a complete departure from regular game management procedure and it would be one that we certainly wouldn't recommend at all. The Commission airplanes have been made available to John Newsom and he has been flying the southern part of the state. He has been spotting the location of these ibis rookers and going back to these ibis rookers on foot and estimating the numbers of nesting pairs, the time of the hatching and so forth. He has also been doing some banding and wing marking which will serve to provide information on local movements of the ibis, so there is quite a lot of work being done through Newsom and the fish and game division.

I think what it is going to boil down to presently is to develop a method of keeping these ibis out of these crawfish ponds, to eliminate this depredation problem. We have dealt with this



depredation problem in deer; we have dealt with them in waterfowl and there are procedures that can be employed to control depredation to a degree. Things like deer and doe, you've got to thin your herd.

MR. WINFREE: Well, I would guess there would be no problem with the crawfish ponds, because their only complaint, as I understand it, is with the crawfish.

MR. HERRING: Where you get a concentration of birds in a limited area, scaring devices will provide you with some relief, particularly a bird that is sensitive to loud noises or flashing lights or something along that line. These ibis, of course, do group up in large flocks in limited areas in these crawfish pools.

MR. NORRIS: Are these the only birds that eat crawfish?

MR. HERRING: Well, no, and we don't think the ibis has ever had any adverse effect on crawfish population under natural conditions because crawfish and ibis have been living side by side for



thousands of years, without one eliminating the other, but where you do have a farmer out there with a ten or twenty acre crawfish operation going on, when he begins to lower his water in June, after he has harvested his crop, well, he wants to protect his brood stock. He doesn't want to lose any of those because those breeding pairs of crawfish are going in the ground where these deep waters are still, and it is at that time when he lowers the water level in his field that he gets the advantage. It is at that time that some scaring devices are going to have to be developed to move these birds off of his crawfish crop. We don't think the hunting season at that time is the answer because you simply do not set hunting seasons during nesting periods of any form of wild life.

MR. HOFFPAUER: Some of this crawfish farming down there, they will drain these fields and drop the water down, but then they will hold it for three or four inches. I don't comprehend this at all, because our recommendation is that you drain it completely and then they burrow.



MR. KYLE: I imagine there's 20,000 acres of crawfish going in down there and that 20,000 more people mad.

MR. HERRING: If we can come up with a method to keep them out of there, that's the answer.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is there any other discussion? Is there anything else?

MR. WRIGHT: I move we adjourn.

THE CHAIRMAN: If there is nothing else, the meeting is adjourned.

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